

"Footprints" Episode #221

[Previously ...](#)

**Matt stormed out after another argument with Sarah over her recent behavior and her attitude towards Molly.*

**Molly confessed to Danielle that she has very deep feelings for Brent but said that she wants to maintain her friendship with him no matter what.*

**Jason and Courtney made love for the first time.*

**Andy overheard Katherine talk about her plan to get rid of Danielle forever. When he confronted her, she admitted to arranging for Danielle's tour. They argued over their interference in each other's lives and Andy ran out in anger.*

FISHER HOME

"Is that all?" Bill asks as he drops an armful of supplies on the living room floor.

"Uh, yeah," Sarah says, throwing one more glance at the car out by the curb. "Yeah, that's it."

Bill wipes his brow with the back of his hand. "Whew. I didn't know backbreaking labor would be part of a weekend with my one-year-old granddaughter."

Paula surveys the heap of items on the floor. "You never did figure out how to pack well, did you, Sarah?"

Sarah stares down at the pile of Victoria's things. "Guess not," she mutters, suddenly feeling that familiar twinge of annoyance.

"Did this trip come up out of the blue?" Paula asks as she takes the baby from Sarah's arms. "I would have thought that Matt would be taking her."

"He's busy this weekend." The response comes out automatically, the fruit of much prior worrying over this inquiry. There's no need to get into what happened with Matt; it will be patched up soon enough anyway, she's sure of that. The rest of the explanation tumbles out, as if worried that it will be forgotten if it isn't said quickly enough: "This case is sort of last-minute and Matt was already tied up this weekend. I figured Victoria would love to have the weekend with her grandparents anyway--"

"--and we're thrilled to have her," Paula beams as she hoists the little girl high up in the air and then brings her back down to snuggle noses.

Bill folds his arms in front of him. "What does Matt have going on this weekend?"

"I'm not sure," Sarah manages. She thought she'd gotten past this already. "He just has a bunch of stuff going on, I guess."

"Oh. He's still working, then?"

"Yeah," Sarah answers. She stretches out the end of the word, trying to figure out where Bill is going with this. "He kind of has to work, you know?"

"Well, yeah, but I thought he'd have wrapped that up by now," Bill says. Then, seeing the confused expression on Sarah's face, he adds, "He did tell you the good news, didn't he?"

Sarah's first instinct is to cover and pretend that everything is fine with Matt, but clearly Bill knows something that she doesn't, and she would rather not look stupid. "What are you talking about?" she asks.

"Oh." Bill's face takes on a puzzled expression. "I can't believe he didn't tell you."

Sarah is struggling to remain calm and not appear as though she's been left out of the loop once again, but inside she is screaming: *Didn't tell me what??*

FISHER HOME

Outside, the August sun is throwing itself over the Fishers' backyard with great intensity. Jason is sprawled on the lawn, a beach towel underneath him. The heat is heavy enough that it practically made him want to crawl out of his skin, but the most he could manage was to shed his shirt. Now the sun is beating down on his toned torso and, he hopes, giving it a good bronzing.

The light is bright, almost to the point of stinging his eyes, so he closed them long ago. Since then he has been sweeping in and out of brief spells of sleep and hazy daydreams.

"Hey, you lazy bum!"

It is in the middle of one of these daydreams that he hears the shout. He can't quite place what's wrong with it at first, except that it seems out-of-place. Quickly he jerks out of the daydream and back to consciousness. His eyes shoot open, filling his vision with the burning gold of the sun. He snaps them shut instinctively.

"Aren't you roasting alive out here?" Molly says as her bare feet cover the remaining few feet of lawn between them.

"I'm working on my tan, duh," he smirks, glancing over at her only after he positions a hand to shield his eyes.

"Ah, of course. The important things." She begins to lower herself down onto the grass beside him and he scoots over so that she can sit on the towel. "So are you ever going to go out and get a job or anything like that?" she teases.

"I guess I'll have to eventually. But not 'til I'm done being serious about skating."

"You could milk this for a long time, you realize that?"

He nods, his lips curling up. "Oh, yeah. Absolutely." He pauses ever so briefly but is clearly running something through his mind. "Hey, speaking of skating, Courtney and I decided that we're gonna take our Senior test after this season."

"So does that mean you'll be done with skating?"

Jason shrugs. "It could. But we'll be able to compete as a Senior pair then if we want to, and if we decide we're done competing, then we can at least know we accomplished what we've always wanted to." He risks opening his eyes but quickly brings his hand back to block the sun. "It'll be so weird to be done with all our tests. And to know that we took all our tests together and made it the whole way as a pair ... It's really gonna be cool."

It is apparent to Molly how close he is to drifting off into space. Amusement cracks her lips.

"You're really excited about this test," she comments, tacking an uncertainty onto the end of the sentence that makes it partly a question.

"Totally." A grin that could only be described as goofy washes over his face. "It's nuts how cool this whole thing is, how Court and I have been friends since we were little and we've been skating together almost the whole time, and now we're gonna get our Senior test together ..."

"And?"

He looks up at Molly with confusion. "Huh?"

"And ... ? You were going to say something else."

"I was?"

"The thought definitely crossed your mind," she says. "So what gives? You're practically gushing."

He gives no response for several seconds but then turns his head to face her. "Courtney and I ... we, uh ..."

"Mm-hmm," Molly says with a smile, her look completing the statement for him. "Well, um, congratulations, I guess."

"Thanks," he laughs. He closes his eyes again and lies back down. "Mol, it was totally amazing. Just awesome. Like, I can't even believe how powerful the whole thing was."

"This relationship seems like it's getting a lot more serious."

"It is. I--" He hesitates, thinking for a moment that the sentiment sounds dorky, but he proceeds anyway. "I think I'm really in love with her."

Molly's reaction spreads over her face slowly. "Wow. Not that I didn't think you two were headed in that direction, but it sounds strange hearing my little brother say that."

"It sounds weird hearing myself say it," Jason admits. "But it's how I feel. And Mol--" There is an edge to the way he says her name, as if he is about to let her in on something very important and very confidential. He lowers his voice as he continues, "I think I might propose to her."

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

"Hey, look who it is!" Brent exclaims as the door to his hospital room opens and closes.

"Hi there," Andy says as he makes his way over to the bed. His gaze sweeps over the room once more and he relaxes as he realizes that Danielle is not here. Not that it would have been bad to run into her, but he isn't sure what else they would have to say to each other.

"It's good to see you, bud," Brent says. "Sit down."

Andy obliges, pulling one of the cushioned wooden chairs closer to the bed. "I'm sorry I haven't been by in a bit. I'm sure Danielle told you that I was here the other night--"

"And you had something urgent to do all of a sudden. Yeah, she told me. What was that all about?"

"I'll explain later." Andy dismisses the topic with a wave of the hand. "It actually relates to something else that I need to tell you."

"All right," Brent says, "but first, tell me what it was like running into Danielle. She didn't say much except that it was very nice -- I think that's how she put it. What was it like for you?"

He sees Andy hesitating and adds, "Hey, if it's weird to talk about it with me 'cause I'm her brother, I understand. I just thought since you and I talked so much about it after you two split up--"

"No, no, it's fine. Actually, it *was* nice. That's a good way to describe it. It felt like the conclusion that I needed -- and the one she needed, I hope. We said some things that needed to be said and that was it. I feel like we resolved whatever was left hanging."

"Good. I know that it wasn't a comfortable situation for either one of you, so I'm glad you feel like it's resolved. Just between you and me, Danielle said she felt the same way."

Andy nods, taking in the information. He had hoped Brent would mention it because he wanted to know, although he never would have asked.

"The only thing," Brent continues, "is that she was really confused by the way you rushed out. So tell me what was going on."

"I told you, it relates to something else. It's rather big news, actually."

"Oh, really. I've got some big news, too."

Andy is all too happy to put his announcement off for another few minutes. "You go first, then."

In that split-second before Brent speaks, Andy tries to read his friend's face and figure out what this news might be.

FISHER HOME

"What are you talking about, Dad?" Sarah asks as she attempts to maintain her composure.

"It's about his job," Bill says, already looking quite pleased with himself. "I had a chat with Matt the other day."

He pauses, drawing the moment out for all it is worth, until he sees that Sarah is about ready to burst.

"Come on, Dad!" she pleads, although her frustration is tempered by a chuckle as she remembers that Bill used to love to tease her like this when she was younger.

It feels to Sarah like the air in the room is all gone, but Bill sucks up even more of it, tightening the tension, as he makes her wait. Finally he lets it out. "I offered Matt a job, and he accepted."

Sarah was sort of expecting that to be the news, but knowing that it is a reality sends her off into a web of thoughts. *Matt will be working with Dad?* The idea of Matt being in such close proximity to the family unnerves her slightly, although she isn't sure why.

"I can't believe he didn't tell you," Paula says.

"He must just be waiting to spring it on me at the right moment. We've both been really busy." To her own ears, Sarah sounds extremely distracted, but she hopes it's not something her parents can detect. She doesn't want to have to explain what happened with Matt, or what's going on ... What *is* going on, anyway?

She is pulled from the path of wandering thoughts by Bill. "I was just so impressed with the way he helped me out that night that I felt like I needed him at the restaurant," he is saying. "I was in need of another cook anyway, after that fiasco the night you and Matt came in, so I figured there was no need to make the search difficult. I had the right man for the job right in front of me."

"Yeah," Sarah comments absently. But she may as well not be there now, because she is totally dominated by one thought: *Something like this definitely should have made Matt at least get in touch with me. How mad is he?*

The potential answer to that question is troubling, but she is surprised at how suffocating the next question is: *What if I really have pushed him too far?*

FISHER HOME

"Don't." The word of caution -- of forbidding -- is out before Molly even realizes it. Yet she doesn't regret it one bit, and she adds to it without hesitation. "Don't do that, Jay. Not now."

Shock swells on Jason's face and he springs to a sitting position. "What?"

"Don't propose to Courtney. Not yet." Seeing that, as she expected, Jason doesn't understand why she is telling him this, she continues, "The last thing you need is to rush into something like this too fast."

"This is *it*, Molly--"

"That wouldn't surprise me. But it doesn't mean that either of you are ready for marriage."

Jason opens his mouth to protest but Molly cuts him off. "Jay, that's precisely the mistake I made with Craig. I'm not saying that either of you is insane or that what you have isn't genuine, but rushing into a commitment is never a good thing."

Silently Jason allows the sentiment to sink in. "All right," he says at last, his shoulders drooping. "Point taken."

"Good." She places a comforting hand on his bare shoulder. "I'm not trying to be a pain. I just don't want to see you get hurt -- or ruin something that really could be 'it.'"

It isn't a topic that Jason wishes to continue. Luckily Molly already gave him the transition he needs. "Does what happened with Craig still scare you?"

Her immediate discomfort at being tossed back into that time answers the question for her, but after a moment of gathering herself, she says, "Yes and no. It's not so much the real fear that I had after the truth about Craig came out. For a while I didn't want to trust anyone and I was scared that everyone I met would turn out to be a maniac."

She censors her thoughts as she speaks, knowing that she doesn't want to discuss with Jason how she now realizes that she never even gave her relationship with Brian Hamilton a real shot. It was too soon after the ordeal with Craig and she was determined to show that she could move forward, when in reality all she wanted was to cling to what was safe and familiar.

"But it does still scare me," she says. "It scares me that I was too foolish to see what Craig was doing, and that I might be foolish enough to make the same type of mistake."

Jason rolls onto his side. "Is that why you haven't gotten involved with anyone in so long? You haven't even dated--"

"Maybe." She knows that her eyes drop and hopes that they haven't totally given her away. "That's part of it, I know. But it hasn't really been a priority, either. I haven't had the chance to date anyone who I'd really want to put the necessary effort into getting to know."

Jason can tell what is running through her mind. He delays his reaction, not certain what it should be. He knows that he needs to be comforting, to show Molly that he does empathize with her, but he also wants to reprimand her for even entertaining those thoughts.

"I want you to be happy, Mol," he begins carefully. "I can tell you're having trouble with everything that's going on with Sarah and Brent."

"But ..." She waits and then says, "I sense a 'but' coming on."

"There is a 'but' coming," Jason admits. "*But* -- I don't want to see you -- or them -- get hurt anymore than you all already have been. I can see what you're doing, even if you don't mean to do it, and I don't want you to set yourself up for such an enormous disappointment."

Molly's lips twitch with protest but she has no words.

"Don't do this to yourself," he says. "You need to move on, for your own good. You need to stop holding out for a happy ending with Brent."

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

"I'm getting outta here!" Brent exclaims.

Like Andy had hoped, it is good news. "You're being released? Excellent!"

"I don't think I could get better news right now," Brent says. "I can't wait to get out of here and start doing things for myself again. I'm tired of lying in this bed and having everyone rush around to do things for me."

"I can imagine that would get frustrating," Andy says. "Congratulations. When do you get to bust out for good?"

"As soon as I want. Danielle's supposed to be coming by later. I haven't told her yet, but I figure she'll help me get out of here as fast as she can."

"What do you say we spring you right now?"

Brent's eyes widen with excitement, like a child on Christmas morning. "You sure?"

"Of course. I'm the reason you wound up here in the first place. I may as well help you

escape."

Suddenly Brent is jittery with anticipation. There is so much to do that he has no idea where or how to begin.

Andy is able to offer him some direction. "Where will you be staying?"

"The hotel, I guess," Brent answers with a half-shrug. "I don't want to be there very long, but anything's better than this place right now. Once I'm out I'll start looking for an apartment."

"How about my apartment?"

"What?" Brent's confusion is apparent. He shakes his head. "No, I don't want to impose--"

"You wouldn't be imposing. It'd be all yours."

Now he has really lost Brent. "Huh?" is all the police commander can say.

"I told you that I had news," Andy says. "This is it. The apartment is all yours if you want it -- I'm leaving King's Bay."

END OF EPISODE #221

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